

# FAST BLAST



**OUR MISSION: "Make education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians."**

**DIANA FUENTES-MICHEL**, Executive Director, California Student Aid Commission

July 10, 2008

## New Fiscal Year, Same Focus – Providing Quality Service to Students and Schools

This is a year of change at the Commission and we continue to evaluate options available to serve students and stakeholders the best way possible as we administer our programs.

As we enter a new State Fiscal Year, the proposed reduction in the Commission's budget has resulted in a reduction in staff, resources and services. Staff and I remain committed to identifying creative ways to continue to provide the best service possible using innovative methods, given the existing limited resources.

At this time, however, we must change some services in the following areas: Call Center, Publications, Training and Outreach.

We are working diligently to minimize the impact the reductions in service have on you and the students we serve.

## New Call Center Phone Hours

Beginning Thursday, July 10, 2008, the new hours for the Student Call Center will be 1:00 p.m. to 4:55 p.m., PST, Monday – Friday. These new hours will permit staff to balance telephone workload and e-mail responses, forms processing and other related work.

Students may choose to use any of the following resources to contact the Commission 24/7.

Web sites:

[csac.ca.gov](http://csac.ca.gov)

[calgrants.org](http://calgrants.org)

[mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov](http://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov)

Call toll free, 1-888-224-7268 and navigate through our Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system. Students will hear current information about phone availability (replacing a busy signal) and timely seasonal updates, as appropriate.

If you have any additional suggestions contact Thea Pot-Van Atta, Student Support Services Branch Manager at [tpva@csac.ca.gov](mailto:tpva@csac.ca.gov) or (916) 464-8099.

## Publications

Over the last several years, the Commission has provided free publications to stakeholders. Many items were used in reaching out to students and families regarding financial aid options for education beyond high school. Under our new structure, many forms will remain available to you online in a format that you can use to print your materials.

The Fund Your Future series will be published this year and posted to our Web site. We are considering the option to print hard copies for distribution as well. We will share more information with you in the near future.

At this time it is unknown if the College Cash Box will be produced this year.

## Training and Outreach

Training and outreach functions will move towards online services. Staff is working on developing effective presentations that you will be able to view and use online or, you may choose to join us at the Commission for training presentations as they become available.

## Chafee Grant 2008-09 Update

The California Chafee Grant Program continues to process new applications and renewal information for the 2008-09 academic year. The Commission encourages institutions to process a 2008-09 Financial Needs Analysis Report (NAR) for each eligible applicant enrolled or planning to enroll in their institution. Applicants without a completed NAR cannot be considered for an award. The Commission anticipates processing awards within the next few weeks.

## **New Mailing Address for Express Mail Delivery and New Phone Number Prefixes**

### **New address**

Due to the upcoming expiration of the Commission's headquarters facility lease, staff has relocated to the Commission's South building facility located at 10834 International Drive, Rancho Cordova 95670. Please use this new address for all express mail deliveries. Our P.O. Box numbers used for general mail will remain the same until further notice. We anticipate the final phase of the Commission's move to the new permanent facility to take place spring of 2009.

### **New phone number prefixes**

On July 1, 2008, the Commission converted to a new Centrex based phone system. As a result of this change, Commission employees were assigned new phone numbers with a 464 prefix. In most instances, the last four digits of employee numbers remained the same. All 526 prefix numbers will be forwarded to the new 464 prefix extensions for 6 months. The Commission's toll free number will remain the same.

## **New Commission Officers**

At the Commission's June meeting, new officers were elected for the 2008-09 year. They are Peter Hankwitz as Chair of the Commission; Lorena Hernandez, Vice-Chair, and Dr. Yasmin Delahoussaye, Secretary.

"Making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians in today's economic climate is extremely challenging," said Commission Chair Hankwitz. "Enrollment is surging at many of our community colleges and other post-secondary institutions, budgets are being trimmed, and students' personal financial resources are stretched more than ever. As the state student loan guaranty agency for California, and as administrators of the Cal Grant Program, among others, we have an obligation to take an innovative and comprehensive approach to the deployment of state and federal resources to help students achieve their higher educational goals. And I am honored to lead this effort." Hankwitz was appointed by the Governor to the Commission in January 2008.

**Peter Hankwitz** founded Peter Hankwitz Production & Management in 2000 and currently serves as executive producer. Hankwitz was co-founder of Starbar Entertainment and Reburn & Hankwitz Creative Agency. He is co-founder of the Robert Urich Foundation for Cancer Research and Patient Care and is past community advocate for the Yucca Corridor Gang Abatement Project in Los Angeles. He is a member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, Gay &

Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation and The Next Generation Council of the Motion Picture & Television Fund.

**Lorena Hernandez** was appointed to the Commission in 2007. Hernandez is the California Regional Director, Communications for Comcast Corporation. Prior to Comcast, Hernandez served as Vice President of Communication and Community Development for the Marchese Company, Vice President of the Walther Kaitz Foundation, Communications Program Officer at the California HealthCare Foundation and Associate Director of Media Relations for Children Now. Hernandez has more than 18 years of experience in media relations, public relations, government relations and community development.

**Dr. Yasmin Delahoussaye** was also appointed to the Commission in 2007. In 1998, Delahoussaye was appointed as the Vice President of Student Service of Los Angeles Valley College, where she oversees all areas of Student Services and serves as the college's administrator in charge of student discipline. She also served as the college's Dean of Student Services. Prior to joining Valley College, she served as counselor, matriculation coordinator, director of school relations and outreach and articulation officer at Pierce College. She began her career with the Los Angeles Community College District in 1988, after spending 15 years as a high school teacher and counselor in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Delahoussaye has received city, state, and national awards for her non-profit organization that works with disadvantaged youth.

## **Welcome New Commissioner**

On June 25, 2008, the Senate Rules Committee appointed former Senator Barry Keene to serve as a member of the California Student Aid Commission.

Keene was appointed to fill the unexpired term of Daniel Friedlander as one of the two Senate appointees to the Commission. Keene, coauthor of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting legislation, was a California State Senator (1979-1993) and State Assemblyman (1973-1979). He also served as a Deputy District Attorney in Sonoma County and as the director of the Department of General Services.

Keene brings a wealth of experience, having served in leadership positions within both the executive and legislative branches in California.

*Your ideas and feedback are important to the Commission. Please forward your comments to [Fastblast@csac.ca.gov](mailto:Fastblast@csac.ca.gov)*